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Trudeau calls federal election, voters to go to the polls Sept. 20

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OTTAWA -- Justin Trudeau has set in motion an early federal election, sending voters to the polls on Sept. 20 and setting up his re-election bid as a chance for Canadians to have their voices heard about who they want to lead the country at this pivotal moment in the pandemic.

The prime minister and Liberal leader visited Gov. Gen. Mary Simon at Rideau Hall Sunday morning where she accepted his request to dissolve the 43rd Parliament and draw up the 338 writs, triggering a summer election.

With voting day scheduled for Sept. 20, the campaign will be 36 days, the shortest possible election period under federal law.



- Go to election.ctvnews.ca for all our federal election updates
- Trudeau calls federal election, voters to go to the polls Sept. 20
- Everything you need to know about the 2021 federal election
- Where the federal party leaders are Monday, Aug. 16
- Candidate nominations: Where the parties stand on day 1 of the campaign
- Throne speech's recovery plan still a work in progress as election called
- Ready or not? Canadians apprehensive as parties brace for an election call
- 'Recoil effect': New Nanos polling shows Liberals may be out of majority territory
- Trudeau starts 'pivotal' campaign for Canada, Liberals in his home province of Quebec
- Dates and venue set for federal leaders' debates ahead of Sept. 20 election
- How the COVID-19 infodemic and conspiracy theories may influence the election
- O'Toole comes out against mandatory vaccinations for federal employees, travellers
- NDP unveils campaign platform ahead of expected election call
- Conservatives raise twice as much as Liberals in first half of year as election looms

Facing just over five weeks of campaigning, Canadians will be weighing the pitches from each party to determine who they feel is best to carry the country through the rest of the pandemic,

and out of it.

- [Election Dispatch: Sign up for a daily update on the campaign](#)

Following his meeting with Simon—who has been the Queen’s representative in Canada for less than a month— Trudeau spoke to reporters outside Rideau Hall. There, he sought to frame the rationale for a pandemic election while reopening and vaccination efforts are still underway, and given he’s managed to maintain the confidence of the House of Commons.

“The decisions your government makes right now will define the future your kids and grandkids grow up in. So in this pivotal, consequential moment, who wouldn’t want a say? Who wouldn’t want their chance to help decide where our country goes from here? Canadians need to choose how we finish the fight against COVID-19 and build back better,” Trudeau said, facing a series of questions from reporters about why he called the vote after he and his caucus stated multiple times a pandemic election was not in their plans.

“Canadians deserve their say, and that’s exactly what we are going to give them,” Trudeau said. He is kicking off his campaign Sunday afternoon with a virtual townhall with candidates.

“After making it through 17 months of nothing like we’ve ever experienced, Canadians deserve to choose what the next 17 months, what the next 17 years and beyond, will look like. And I know that we have the right plan, the right team, and the proven leadership to meet that moment,” he said. “So to the other parties: Please explain why you don’t think Canadians should have the choice? Why you don’t think that this is a pivotal moment?”

It was a more pared-down first day on the campaign trail than he’s had in previous elections. He held a virtual townhall with candidates from a studio setup inside a downtown Ottawa hotel which the party could rely on throughout the campaign. He then travelled by bus to Blainville, Que. for a brief meet and greet with local candidates and supporters at a cafe patio. Selfies are one fixture of Trudeau’s appearances that haven’t fallen victim to the pandemic, now they’re just taken with masks on.

Trudeau will be finishing the day in his home riding of Papineau, Que.

All other federal party leaders kicked off their campaigns with remarks in which they framed their focus for the race, and called out Trudeau for triggering the vote while the country is still trying to rebound from the last 17 months.

While the opposition parties have criticized Trudeau’s timing, arguing that the Liberals are unnecessarily putting their own political interests above those of Canadians who are once again facing another wave of COVID-19 cases, all sides have already been engaging in pseudo-electioneering all summer long.

Given the ongoing pandemic, parties have had to map out public health parameters in an effort to safely crisscross the country pitching themselves, their candidates, and their platforms. This has included various elements of protections depending on each campaign, including mandatory vaccination and regular rapid testing.

O'TOOLE CAMPAIGN

Conservative Leader Erin O'Toole is participating in virtual-only events in Ottawa for the first day of his campaign.

Responding to the election trigger, O'Toole said Canadians shouldn't have to risk the gains they've made over the last year and a half for "political games."

"I hope that [Justin Trudeau's] decision doesn't cost Canadians too dearly. My wife Rebecca and I had COVID-19, we know the fears and uncertainties that are out there. But let's be clear, this election is not about next week, next month, or even next year, it's about the next four years," he said.

O'Toole positioned himself as the leader with a "fresh" approach.

"I'm going to be presenting Canada's recovery plan. I have a track record of bringing people together from my time in the military, my time in the private sector as a volunteer. I'm in this for my children and your children," he said.

He said there are only two options on the ballot for Canadians to choose from this election: "Canada's Conservatives or more of the same from the Liberals and the other parties."

Making use of the party's studio setup in Ottawa, the leader who is running his first federal race at the helm of his party, has two scheduled "telephone townhalls" with supporters in Quebec and British Columbia.

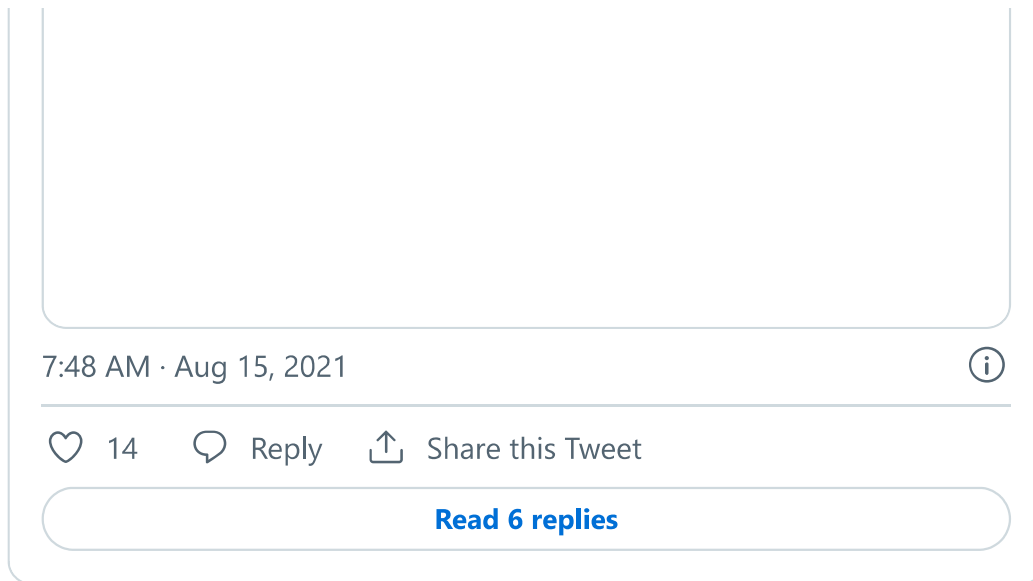
The first was hosted by Saint Laurent candidate Richard Serour and included voter call-ins.

Glen McGregor 

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CPC leader Erin O'Toole will begin the election campaign from this TV set in an Ottawa hotel ballroom. Will campaign virtually for at least this first day, beaming into events in Quebec and BC.

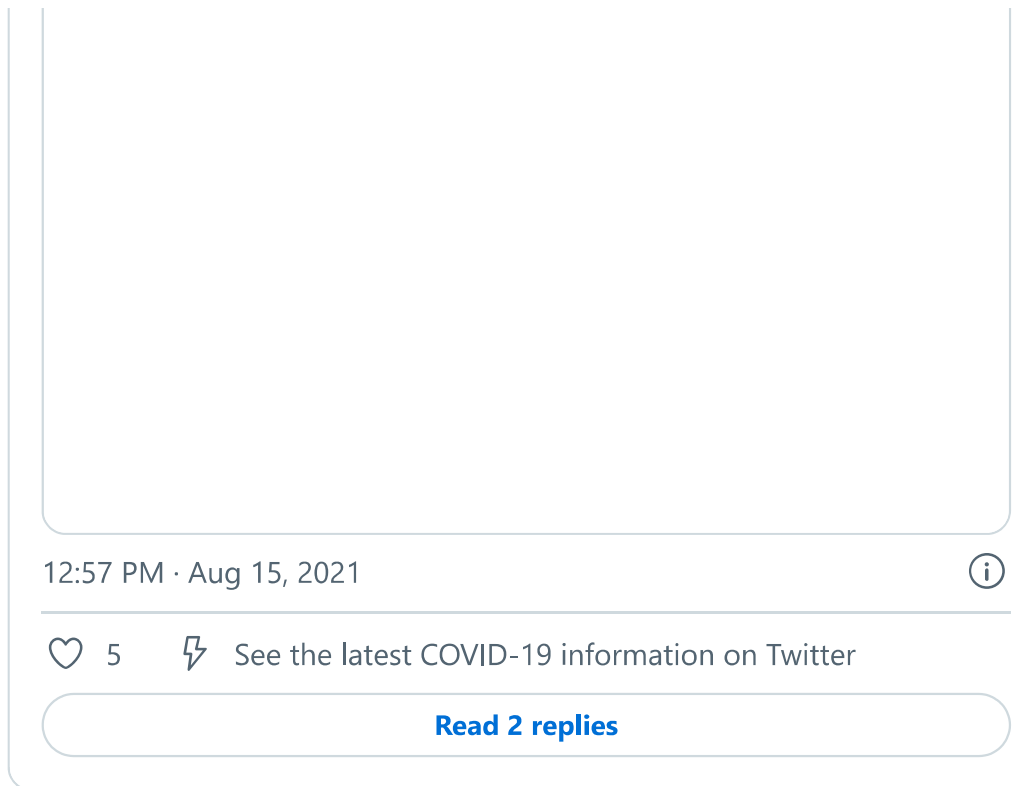


BLANCHET CAMPAIGN

Bloc Québécois Leader Yves-Francois Blanchet meanwhile was in Montreal, wishing his candidates a successful campaign but also underlining that an election is “very irresponsible” amid the pandemic.

“Until recently, the prime minister was swearing that no, everything he was doing was not with the perspective of an election and that his only objective was to protect the health of Canadians. He’s suddenly realized in August, two months after Parliament was in recess that suddenly it’s dysfunctional,” he said, speaking to supporters in French.





SINGH CAMPAIGN

NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh also started his campaign in Montreal and later attended a Pride event.

He used the moment to present the NDP as the most progressive option for voters, namely as it relates to the country's post-pandemic recovery.

"We are the only party saying very clearly that there's a third option, which is to make the ultra-rich pay their fair share...and invest that into health care and to housing and to justice for Indigenous people," he said.

He also accused Trudeau of using the election to gain more power, and walking away from important issues like climate change.

"He wants a majority, but why does he want a majority? It's certainly not because he wants to help more people, or help people more, it's only because he wants to help people less and people end up paying the price. The reality is that he's fed up with New Democrats pushing him to deliver more help to more people," he said. "It's clear that in calling this election he's walking away from a lot of things that could be done."

Annie Bergeron-Oliver 
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Today the NDP leader is at Montreal Pride. He is stopping to take photos with supporters and elbow bump fans. "He's the only prime minister candidate I want to see at this walk," says one young voter behind me. Beside her a man makes a "who is that."

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PAUL CAMPAIGN

Green Party Leader Annamie Paul launched her campaign from her coveted riding of Toronto Centre with a rally, "mainstreeting," and a virtual evening launch party with candidates.

She said she's approaching this election the same way she approached the party's leadership campaign.

"With hope, with humility, with humour... and most of all, from start to finish, I hope with a great deal of honesty and honour and I extend the same invitation to all Canadians," she said. "To every person that is ready to be daring, to every person that is ready to strike out in that new direction toward a better future, I say 'welcome', I say 'now is the time,' and I say, 'join us.'"

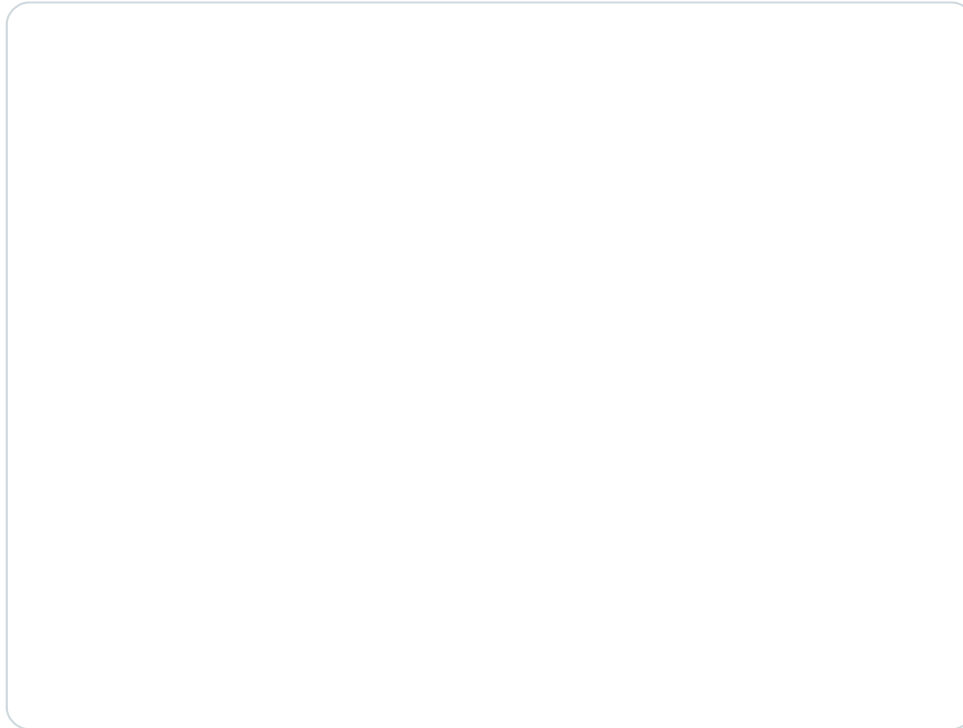
Paul will spend most of the 36-day campaign in her riding, where she is trying for a third time to win the seat and ultimately make her way to Parliament Hill.

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Paul speaks in Toronto to start campaign.



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In the 2019 federal election, voters reduced the 2015 Liberal majority to a minority and now Trudeau is ready to gamble that his handling of the pandemic—and the unprecedented financial support doled out— will propel his party back to majority territory.

However, polling data issued Friday by Nanos Research showed Liberal support dropping out of majority territory after the election call was reported.

While the next fixed election date isn't until October 2023, minority governments rarely last the full four years between elections.

With [Elections Canada](#) embarking on a series of new public health measures to ensure that the vote is conducted safely amid a fourth wave, the price tag for the election is estimated to be \$610 million.

Canada's Chief Electoral Officer Stephane Perrault has previously spoken favourably about of having a longer writ period—campaigns can be up to 50 days in length under current rules— to

allow Elections Canada to have a longer runway to get all elements of a national election in place. Nevertheless, the agency says it will be ready to safely conduct a vote that's expected to include much more uptake in mail-in ballots.

After a last-minute crunch to pass as many key bills as possible before the House of Commons and Senate adjourned in June given the rampant speculation of a summer election call, all outstanding business in both chambers has died with the dissolution of Parliament, leaving it up to the next government to restart a legislative agenda.

During [the process of dissolving a Parliament](#) there are three main steps: dismissing the senators and members; calling the next Parliament and ordering the writs to be issued; and setting the date for when Parliament will next meet after the writs are returned with the results.

Writs are written orders instructing the returning officer in each of the 338 federal ridings to hold an election to select a member of Parliament.

The government, and the bureaucracy in each federal department and agency, will now enter a "caretaker" mode in which major decisions are limited.

Heading into the campaign, here's the current seat breakdown in the House of Commons:

- Liberal: 155
- Conservative: 119
- Bloc Québécois: 32
- NDP: 24
- Independent: 5
- Green Party: 2

A party needs to win 170 seats for a majority government.

With files from CTV News' Sarah Turnbull

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